

SECRET

25X1



1 July 1966

No. 1370/66

Copy No. 24

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

WORLD REACTION TO THE US BOMBING OF
HANOI-HAIPHONG PETROLEUM INSTALLATIONS
ON 29 AND 30 JUNE

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

State Dept. review completed

GROUP 1
Excluded from automatic
downgrading and
declassification

SECRET

WARNING

This Document contains information affecting the National Defense of the United States, within the meaning of Title 18, Sections 793 and 794, of the U.S. Code, as amended. Its transmission or revelation of its contents to or receipt by an unauthorized person is prohibited by law. The reproduction of this form is prohibited.

SECRET

25X1

No. 1370/66

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
1 July 1966

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM*

World Reaction to the US Bombing of Hanoi-Haiphong
Petroleum Installations on 29 and 30 June

SUMMARY

Up to 1400 EDT, 1 July, world reactions to the US bombings of North Vietnamese petroleum installations near Hanoi and Haiphong on 29 and 30 June had been mainly adverse. Only South Korea, Taiwan, the Philippines, Thailand, and Australia had indicated outright support for the US action, though a number of other countries had expressed their acceptance of the military judgment that the bombing was necessary. Comments from a few other countries were sufficiently noncommittal to indicate that their governments would not openly oppose the US move.

*Prepared by the Office of Current Intelligence

SECRET

25X1

SECRET

25X1

I. The USSR and Eastern Europe

1. Soviet propaganda media, like those of other East European countries, condemned the US air strikes on Hanoi-Haiphong petroleum installations on 29 and 30 June as "barbaric" and "inhuman." The Soviet Government, however, on 30 June released a restrained statement, consistent with remarks made by Premier Kosygin earlier in the day, which was essentially a restatement of past Soviet expressions of support for North Vietnam and criticism of the "shameful crime" committed by the United States. Though characterizing the US raids as of a "particularly dangerous nature," the Soviet Union went no further than its past statements that it "has been and will be rendering the DRV every assistance, economic and political as well as by means of defense, in its struggle against imperialist attack." As had Kosygin, the Soviet Government statement reiterated the charge that US action has proven US talk about a peaceful settlement to be "empty verbiage."

2. During a 1 July speech before the graduates of Soviet military academies, Soviet party chief Brezhnev said, "We are drawing the proper conclusions from the latest crimes of American imperialism. Our assistance to Vietnam will keep growing." Brezhnev could hardly have responded to the US actions with less forcefulness, and his comment falls neatly within the essentially pro forma Soviet response to date. A. A. Roshchin, chief Soviet negotiator at the Geneva Disarmament Conference, also made a perfunctory protest against the US action, but at the same time reiterated that a Vietnam solution is not a condition for a disarmament agreement.

3. Eastern European reaction so far has been predictably critical but fails to make any specific commitment of increased support for North Vietnam. Commentaries from East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Bulgaria, and Albania assail the "new escalation" of "US brutality," using words such as "barbarous" and "criminal aggression." Yugoslavia says the bombing has "shattered to pieces" US statements on a desire for peace in Vietnam. Albania's

SECRET

25X1

~~SECRET~~



commentary echoed the main lines elsewhere in Eastern Europe but took a swipe at the USSR for allegedly siding with the United States in trying to discourage DRV resistance by calling for a peaceful settlement. Hungarian news media treated the bombings factually. East European representatives at Geneva delivered critical statements on 30 June, and the World Federation of Trade Unions headquarters in Prague protested to President Johnson and sent a solidarity message to North Vietnamese Premier Ho Chi Minh.

4. Demonstrations staged before the US embassies in Warsaw and Bucharest on 30 June did minor damage to the premises in both instances.



SECRET

25X1

II. Asian Communist Countries

5. The initial Chinese Communist reaction to the bombings took the form of an NCNA radiobroadcast on 29 June reporting that US aircraft had attacked "the suburbs" of Hanoi and Haiphong and that the North Vietnamese had "fought back heroically" and "won a big victory" by downing seven US planes. The first authoritative Chinese comment, a People's Daily commentator article on 1 July, indicates that Peking does not view the attacks as requiring any change in its present policy toward the Vietnam war. The article implies that the USSR shares responsibility for the US attacks, alleging that the US "plot of attempting to gain peace through bombing" was carried out "through the close collaboration of the CPSU leaders." It repeats Peking's standard pledge of "firm support" for the Vietnamese "no matter how far US imperialism may escalate the war." No reference is made to direct Chinese involvement; rather, the article implies that the Vietnamese will continue to carry the primary responsibility for conducting the war.

6. Hanoi's reaction to the destruction of its major petroleum storage facilities was officially summed up in a sharply worded Foreign Ministry statement of 30 June which labeled the action a "new stage" of escalation by the Americans. Hanoi depicted the US raids mainly as a series of indiscriminate attacks on residential and economic targets unrelated to the DRV war effort. Hanoi propaganda construed the attacks as a victory for its air defenses, claiming seven US aircraft shot down. The pilot of one of the two US aircraft actually lost in the attacks was also paraded in Hanoi.

7. On 1 July, Hanoi propaganda media maintained a high level of protest over the US air strikes, emphasizing rebroadcasts of statements of support and condolence from its supporters around the world. The only threat of North Vietnamese retaliation came in Hanoi predictions of action by the Liberation Front in South Vietnam against US forces there. In a broadcast to international audiences on 1 July, Hanoi boasted that the Liberation Front had already dealt

SECRET

25X1

SECRET

25X1

the Americans a "stinging counterblow" by wiping out a "whole column of US Yankees (1,715 enemy soldiers including 800 American)" in an ambush along Route 13 in Binh Long Province. (US military sources report that this battle involved a VC regiment-size attack on allied units engaged in Operation EL PASO II, in which the VC lost more than 300 men against US losses of ten.)

8. North Korea's expectedly vitriolic denunciation of the strikes alleged that the bombing was the first step in President Johnson's plan "to radically expand the Vietnam war." The commentary, broadcast by Pyongyang radio on 30 June, accused the US Department of State of trying "to shift the responsibility for war escalation to the DRV." Pyongyang's statement, however, threatened no North Korean initiatives in support of Hanoi beyond the standard pledge "to increase assistance to the fighting Vietnamese brothers and surely bring US imperialism... justice."

25X1

SECRET

~~SECRET~~

25X1

III. The British World

9. In the United Kingdom, Prime Minister Wilson reiterated his support of the general US position in Vietnam, but dissociated himself and his government from the bombings. He had previously made clear that he would take this stand, and the US Embassy in London has commented that considering his difficult domestic position he went about as far as he was able in support of the United States. The opposition Conservative Party has taken its strongest stand so far in support of the United States, but this probably stems more from a desire to embarrass Wilson than from approval of the bombings.

10. Britain's left wing is predictably indignant about the bombings, as expressed by statements in Parliament and by anti-American demonstrations in London.

11. Initial press reaction seems more interested in a supposed Anglo-American conflict stemming from Wilson's statement, and in criticizing Wilson's effort to have things both ways, than in the bombing itself. Conservative-inclined papers followed the party in supporting the US action; pro-Labor papers praised Wilson's stand; and the independent London Times expressed understanding of the military reasons for the US decision though it doubted that bombings had ever won a war.

12. Australian Prime Minister Harold Holt issued a statement in Washington on 29 June, almost simultaneously with the US air raids but not specifically referring to them, saying that "no man works harder for peace in Vietnam" than President Johnson and that Australia goes "all the way with LBJ." He was also reported in the press as saying he accepted the US military judgment to bomb North Vietnamese oil depots.

13. Prime Minister Pearson of Canada told Commons on 29 June that Canada has always maintained that a letup in air bombings is a prerequisite to peace negotiations in Vietnam and that bombing should

~~SECRET~~

25X1

SECRET

25X1

[REDACTED]

be stopped. He added, however, that he understood the United States did not regard the bombing of oil facilities as a change in policy. Most Canadian press headlines treat the US action as an escalation of the Vietnam war. Canadians demonstrated before the US Embassy in Ottawa and the Consulate General in Vancouver.

25X1

-6-

SECRET

~~SECRET~~

25X1

IV. Western Europe

14. French President de Gaulle on 30 June joined Soviet leaders in a declaration that the war in Vietnam represents a menace to world peace and that foreign intervention in Vietnam should cease. At a Kremlin reception on that date, however, De Gaulle did not depart from a prepared text to respond to Kosygin's comments on the air raids near Hanoi and Haiphong. In Paris, the Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry said only that he did not have to tell the US ambassador the attitude of the French Government toward the bombings. Most French newspapers either condemned the bombings or judged them likely to be ineffective. Only the rightist L'Aurore found them "understandable."

15. West German press spokesman Karl-Guenther von Hase announced that his government would register no official reaction to the bombings. In a parallel action, the Erhard cabinet approved the equivalent of \$6.25 million in new technical and humanitarian aid for Vietnam. This act is being construed as reaffirmation of West German faith in US policy.

16. The bombings were given widespread coverage in the West German press and radio. The Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, a journal of international repute, conceded that the attacks would make the supply of Communist forces in the South more difficult, but that they would not stop the infiltration. The Frankfurter Rundschau, an opposition paper with a generally critical attitude toward US Vietnam policy, said the bombings would reduce US standing in Asia and would push North Vietnam into closer dependency on Peking. Heinz Barth, the Washington correspondent of the respected Die Welt, felt that President Johnson had departed from the "middle course" formerly pursued, but was not yet ready to take extreme steps.

17. In the Netherlands, Second Chamber President Van Thiel said that the great majority of Dutch political and public opinion would understand that

~~SECRET~~

25X1

~~SECRET~~

25X1

petroleum installations were legitimate military targets. A Foreign Ministry official, however, said that the figures on military infiltrations into Vietnam given him by the US ambassador would make it hard for his government to justify the bombing of North Vietnam on the grounds that such bombing can be effective in reducing such infiltration.

18. According to a Belgian Foreign Ministry official, the Belgian Government's first reaction had been to say nothing about the bombings. British Prime Minister Wilson's statement, however, along with a left-wing Socialist's demand to know whether the Belgian Government had been informed in advance, made it impossible to ignore the situation. The prime minister therefore admitted that there had been no prior consultation and that he "could not but regret" the extension of bombing operations to densely populated areas. Unofficial reaction in the radio, TV, and press was in terms of "new degrees of escalation."

19. Italian President Saragat stated his understanding of the need for the US action but indicated that the bombings would be a sensitive problem for his government, particularly in the light of British Prime Minister Wilson's declaration. He noted that Premier Moro would have to face Communist questions in parliament. The non-Communist Italian press generally reported the facts of the bombings without polemics. The Communist press treated the news predictably as "criminal American escalation."

20. The official Vatican newspaper Observatore Romano expressed "regret and anxiety" at the bombings and called again for a negotiated settlement of the Vietnamese war.

21. In Portugal, the Director General of Political Affairs in the Foreign Ministry expressed no surprise or concern when informed of the US action.

22. In Norway, a high Foreign Ministry official indicated that the government may not make any statement, on the theory that unless it can say

~~SECRET~~

25X1

SECRET

25X1

something helpful it is better to keep quiet. His own view is that the bombing is a necessary military action but that it would be hopeless to try to get any positive statement of this nature through the cabinet.

23. In Denmark, the Permanent Secretary of the Foreign Ministry said the government would not issue a statement, but that it agrees with the United Kingdom's view and feels that the bombings will stiffen North Vietnamese resistance. The conservative press will not comment "until things simmer down." The neutralist-minded Radical Liberal press and the Social Democratic newspapers take a more critical view and express great concern about casualties among the civilian populace.

24. In Sweden, where the Vietnam question in the past has aroused strong popular feeling, only the television and radio commentators have referred to the stepped-up tempo of bombings. The commentator during the main newscast on 29 June noted that the United States has decided to escalate the war and quoted London's reaction.

25. As expected, the leftist press in Finland is highly critical. One newspaper declared that control of the war in Vietnam is slipping from the hands of President Johnson and into the hands of "military circles and the men of the hard line."

26. Greek and Cypriot news media treated the Hanoi-Haiphong bombings very briefly and factually on 30 June. They also repeated comments from other countries.

SECRET

25X1

SECRET

25X1

V. Asia

27. Middle Eastern reaction is slight. The Egyptian radio quotes the influential newspaper Al-Ahram to the effect that "the escalation of the war in Vietnam has occasioned a violent, direct reaction throughout the world and incurred the denunciation of all peace-loving forces and peoples." The paper says the bombings may precipitate a human massacre unprecedented in the history of mankind. In Syria, a newspaper which speaks for the government denounced the US raids, saying that "America is trying to restore the glories of the 18th and 19th centuries (and)...to impose its new colonialism on the peoples." The highly respected independent Israeli newspaper Maariv says the bombings mark the failure of another stage in mediation efforts and raise the danger of further escalation of the war. The Government of Iran has issued no public comment as yet. Press comments, which are fairly restrained generally regret the "extension" of the Vietnamese war. There has been no reported comment from Turkey.

28. In India, both Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Foreign Minister Swaran Singh have publicly expressed deep concern and distress. Both remarked on the danger of an escalation of hostilities and hoped that the bombings would stop immediately. There were rumors in New Delhi that India might make a new Vietnam peace move. Prime Minister Dudley Senanayake of Ceylon, in a break with his previous moderate stand, condemned the US bombings as retarding the realization of a negotiated peace and possibly leading to a widening of the Vietnam conflict. Senanayake has been under pressure from his country's Buddhist majority population to help the Buddhists of South Vietnam. Also under attack for indecisiveness of leadership, he may feel that by taking a hard line he can prevent criticism from his left-wing opposition. Pakistan as yet has issued no statement either approving or condemning the bombings and may not react officially.

29. Japanese officials publicly minimize the prospect that the US bombing of the petroleum installations near Haiphong and Hanoi will result in an

SECRET

25X1

SECRET

25X1

expansion of US military action in Vietnam. Chief Cabinet Secretary Hashimoto has said the bombing should be regarded as within minimum military requirements. He voiced Japan's longstanding opposition to escalation of military actions and its hopes for a peaceful settlement.

25X1

25X1

30. The US Embassy notes that the bombing has stimulated popular fears that the war will be expanded. The leftist opposition is making efforts to use the bombing issue to mobilize mass demonstrations. The Japanese police, however, do not anticipate large-scale turnouts.

31. The South Korean foreign minister has announced that his government considers the recent US bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong as "appropriate in view of the current phase of the war." Official statements have reflected satisfaction that Seoul had been given advance notice of the bombing.

32. The Taipei press gave the bombings banner headlines on 30 June. All editorial comment was highly favorable in many cases, suggesting that it marked an "increasingly positive" US policy that would lessen the efficiency of the North Vietnamese military machine and "safeguard victory."

SECRET

25X1

~~SECRET~~

25X1

33. Commenting in Canberra where he has been attending the SEATO Ministers' Council, Philippine Foreign Minister Narciso Ramos described the initial bombings as a bold and wise move. "It is about time these installations were bombed," he said. He went on to praise the US maneuver for confining itself to installations where "no civilian areas were affected." Thai Foreign Minister Thanat Khoman, also in Canberra, viewed the bombings as something that would shorten the war and bring peace and stability.

34. The Hong Kong Government, probably with London's concurrence, has requested an indefinite postponement of a scheduled 3 July rest and recuperation visit to the colony by the US aircraft carrier Ranger. The government fears the Chinese Communists would send another note of protest over the visit and possibly incite demonstrations in Hong Kong.

35. No Indonesian comment has been reported.

~~SECRET~~

25X1

SECRET

25X1

VI. Other

36. Latin America, as usual, is responding slowly to news of the Hanoi-Haiphong air raids. Cuban Premier Fidel Castro said in a speech on the night of 29 June that the US bombings are "one more criminal adventuristic step which is driving the world toward a conflict of vast proportions." Castro said also that the new US policy stems from growing world opposition to the US Vietnamese position and that President Johnson is simply following in Hitler's footsteps.

37. All Costa Rican information media have given extensive coverage to the bombing raids, but there has been no editorial reaction. All government officials contacted by the US Embassy see the raids as a logical extension of US military activities in Vietnam. Although there has been no editorial comment in Uruguay to date, most newspapers describe the bombing raids as a new escalation in the war. All newspapers emphasize British Prime Minister Wilson's statement lamenting the raids, while the Communist newspaper El Popular and Montevideo's two largest radio stations repeat Senator Morse's comment that, "As a result of the raids the American flag should be flown at half mast." The Brazilian press has given factual treatment to the bombing raids with no editorial comment to date. The US Embassy does not anticipate any official government reaction.

38. African reaction is also sparse. The government of Ghana expressed concern to the American ambassador over the bombings. It emphasized the importance of creating an atmosphere in which genuine negotiations could be held to solve the Vietnamese problem; it did not consider the bombings conducive to the creation of such an atmosphere. Radio Mali on 30 June carried a critical news report, quoting Chinese Communist and North Vietnamese news sources and mentioning adverse world reaction. There has been no formal public statement by the government of Mali as yet. The Malian foreign minister was very disturbed and felt that a military solution was not the answer to the problem, but he

SECRET

25X1

SECRET

25X1

recognized that the United States had to do what it thought was right. The Ugandan acting foreign minister stated that he was opposed to the war and it was up to the United States and North Vietnam to find a way to stop it. He recognized, however, that the Hanoi-Haiphong bombings did not alter the basic situation. The press in Kenya carried an editorial on 30 June saying that the United States is playing a dangerous game, that Red China has said it would enter the war if the United States bombs civilian populations, and that America's allies must convince President Johnson that escalation of the war must stop.

39. United Nations Secretary General U Thant has expressed deep regret over the bombings. Other comment heard in UN corridors has been sparse but generally unfavorable.

25X1

-14-

SECRET

BEST COPY
Available

Approved For Release 2007/03/06 : CIA-RDP79T00826A001000010002-2

Next 3 Page(s) In Document Exempt

25X1

Approved For Release 2007/03/06 : CIA-RDP79T00826A001000010002-2